

**Report of the
Zero Waste Arlington Committee
to the
2019 Arlington Town Meeting**

Thank you Town Meeting members for supporting Article 28 regarding our name and mission. We will now be known as Zero Waste Arlington, with **increased membership and a wider-ranging mission**. We are striving to enable Arlingtonians to **think more critically about their households' solid waste creation and disposal practices, and the impacts of their personal consumption habits**.

FY 2018-19 Efforts and Results

Outreach and Education: *People have questions. We have answers.* We attend as many community events as possible with the aim of outreach and education. This past year we tabled at the Beer Garden (summer), Feast of the East (June), Town Day (September), and EcoFest (March). We sponsored events at EcoWeek (April) and had a Robbins Library Display. We are discussing zero-waste initiatives with this summer's beer garden vendor. And we are working on usability re-design efforts for the 2019-20 Recycling Guide.

Polystyrene Ban: Thank you also for overwhelmingly voting to pass Article 29, the new regulations on the environmentally pernicious #6 plastic/ Polystyrene, which includes all instances of Styrofoam, as well as rigid polystyrene in restaurant use. We personally visited more than 70 of the 105 food and retail establishments that could be impacted by the ban. We learned that many restaurants had already stopped using polystyrene, or plastics altogether, in response to customer preferences. Our goal for next year will be to build on that by educating restaurant owners and consumers. Businesses can **re-think** their use of plastic and offer alternatives. Customers can **refuse** single-use items such as straws and utensils, and can bring their own containers for packaging leftovers when dining out.

Community Engagement: *Zero Waste takes a village!* In November we hosted a "Know Where to Throw It" gathering at Town Hall Lyons Rm that brought together around 25 community members for brainstorming and team-building. In fact it was conversations at this event that coalesced the idea of our new name and expanded mission. We have had a lot of visitors at our monthly meetings and offers to collaborate - Arlington Public Art, Town-wide Clothing Swap, Aeronaut Brewing, Sustainable Arlington. Our expanded event schedule has resulted in increased signups to the **arlingtonrecycles Google group** we regularly post information about local events, as well as articles about regional trends in solid waste diversion and zero waste initiatives that might be applicable to Arlington.

Textile Campaign: *Worn Torn Donate it All.* We continue to work on the campaign that we started last year. This year we are spreading the word with posters placed all over town and in schools reminding people what textiles they can recycle and where they can deposit them. Working in collaboration with our School Sustainability & Recycling Coordinators, the Bay State Textiles bins have thus far in 2019 received approximately **46,233 lbs** of textiles which translates to **\$2,311.65** for our schools.

Solid Waste Statistics

Arlington's contractor JRM hauls **12,800 tons** of waste a year to Wheelabrator's incineration plant in North Andover. JRM also hauls **5,000 tons from our blue bins** a year to its Greenworks material recovery facility in Peabody for sorting and sale. Our monthly Recycling Center continues to be popular, bringing in hard to recycle, heavier items such as large/bulky rigid plastic, electronics and scrap metal. **Everyone should utilize the Recycling Center to help Arlington increase its diversion rate! WE CAN DO BETTER!** Here are just a few ideas.

REFUSE

What you don't need

REDUCE

What you do need

REUSE

DPW's planned Swap Shed
The Library of Things at the Robbins Library
A Facebook group - Everything is Free in Arlington,
The Little Fox (Reuse) Shop at the Fox Library,
The Arlington List and

REPAIR

We will be bringing Fix-It clinics to town.

RECYCLE

Avoid contamination of your blue bin with plastic bags, film, wrappers
Follow directions found in the Recycling Guide
Textile donation bins located all around town.

ROT

Help reduce trash tonnage we send to the incinerator
Compost in your backyard with a bin from DPW
Consider the several reasonably-priced vendors who are pick up compost in your neighborhood.
Inquire about efforts to expand the pilot food scrap drop off program.

Learn more: We regularly update the Committee's page on the Town Website with news and information about ongoing initiatives. We have a Facebook page to publicize events and hear new ideas from residents. And we have an email list to share ideas and reach out to volunteers.

**Join the efforts of the Zero Waste Arlington!
We meet the third Thursday of every month.**